

# Bold Reform From Newark To Camden

*The State's Intervention Into Camden's Schools Paves The Way For The Type Of Bold And Innovative Reforms The Christie Administration Is Already Implementing In Newark*

*"Let's replace despair with hope in every classroom in New Jersey. Because I believe it is obscene to be satisfied. When the chance for a life filled with hope and opportunity is determined not by how hard you are willing to work but by where you happen to live. Not by your intelligence, but by your zip code."*

– Governor Chris Christie, State Of The State Address, January 17, 2012

## **Working With Teachers To Bring Performance-Based Pay To Newark Schools:**

For the first time in New Jersey history, teachers in Newark will earn raises and be eligible for additional bonuses based on annual performance evaluations that include measuring the progress being made by their students. This new contract will enable Newark to retain and reward the best teachers and improve the quality of education for their students:

- Teachers will receive annual performance evaluations rating them as "Highly Effective," "Effective," "Partially Effective" or "Ineffective."
- Teachers who earn a rating of "effective" or "highly effective" will qualify for annual raises while teachers who receive a less-than-satisfactory evaluation will remain frozen at their current salary level.
- The best performing teachers will also be eligible to earn bonuses based on performance and need.

The new Newark Teachers' contract was made possible when Governor Christie signed into law the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act, a sweeping, bipartisan overhaul of the oldest tenure law in the nation. This marked the first extensive reform of New Jersey's tenure law in over 100 years

- The law was the result of nearly two years of consistent and vocal advocacy for real education reform by Governor Christie and good faith, bipartisan cooperation with members of the legislature, education reform advocates, and stakeholder groups.

## **Record Funding For New Jersey Schools:**

For the third year in a row, Governor Christie is increasing state spending for education. The Governor's proposed increase of \$97.3 million would bring total state aid to schools to nearly \$9 billion, marking the third year in a row of setting a historic high. No school district will receive less K-12 formula aid than the amount provided in fiscal year 2013. Newark Public Schools are funded at \$714,315,679 in Governor Christie's FY14 budget.

**Funding For Opportunity Scholarship Demonstration Grants.** Acting on his belief that every New Jersey child deserves a high quality education regardless of zip code, Governor Christie is providing \$2 million in scholarship grants to allow children in chronically failing schools to attend out-of-district public schools or nonpublic schools.

**The Education Innovation Fund.** As part of Governor Christie's commitment to creating high quality school options for all students, the budget provides \$5 million for an Education Innovation Fund to help schools and educators implement new and innovative instructional models including the use of new teaching technology and online resources.

**An Increase In Funding For Tuition Aid Grants.** Governor Christie is increasing assistance for the neediest college students through Tuition Aid Grants. After increasing funding by \$31.5 million last year, the fiscal year 2014 budget proposes an additional \$17 million for nearly \$353 million in total funding.

**Funding For Independent Colleges.** Acting on his commitment to New Jersey's higher education system, Governor Christie's budget proposal provides \$1 million to independent colleges and universities.

## **Teachers Village:**

In February 2012, Governor Christie helped break ground on the innovative Teachers Village in Newark. This multi-dimensional development will house three charters schools, over 200 workforce housing units and over 70,000 square feet of retail space.

At the heart of Teachers Village is a shared commitment to innovative educational policies that help give choice to families and children who can't afford it. By expanding and providing effective educational choices for students and their families, the Christie Administration is ensuring that every child, no matter what their zip code, has access to a quality education.

### **Putting The Right Person In Charge:**

Taking action on his commitment to implement bold education reforms in Newark that put results for children first, Governor Chris Christie named Cami Anderson superintendent of the Newark Public Schools in May 2011. Prior to working in Newark, Anderson served as the superintendent of Alternative High Schools and Programming for the New York City Department of Education.

Since taking on the role, Superintendent Anderson has sought to bring about real reforms that provide the best results for students, including:

- Improving school quality by closing 12 underperforming schools and launching 8 "renew" schools that provide extended learning time for students and increased autonomy to principals.
- Hiring 30 new principals and replacing underperforming leaders, while empowering principals to be instructional leaders of their schools.
- Increasing choice for Newark's students by launching a high school choice system for the first time this year that will allow every child in Newark to choose from among the city's 13 high schools.
- Developing a new weighted student funding formula that shifts resources and dollars to the students with the highest needs.

### **Focusing On Newark's Lowest Performing Schools:**

The Christie Administration has undertaken bold reform to turn around the state's persistently failing schools. As one of the first states in the country to receive flexibility from No Child Left Behind, the Department of Education is recognizing high performing "Reward" schools and shifting significant resources and support to "Priority" and "Focus" schools, those schools that are the lowest performing in the state or that have significant achievement gaps. The Department is providing the day-to-day support of dozens of expert educators through Regional Achievement Centers to help these schools improve.

- **Priority Schools:** A Priority school is a school that has been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the state over the past three years. There are 14 Priority Schools in Newark and 70 total across the state. Priority schools in this category have an overall three-year proficiency rate of 31.6% or lower.
- **Focus Schools:** A Focus School is a school that has room for improvement in areas that are specific to the school. As part of the process, Focus Schools will receive targeted and tailored solutions to meet the school's unique needs. There are 179 Focus schools across New Jersey, 15 of which are in Newark.

### **The Urban Hope Act:**

The Urban Hope Act is designed to expand the education options available for children and parents who are trapped in some of New Jersey's school districts with the largest achievement gaps. The bill authorizes the conversion of failing schools into renaissance schools in three of our highest needs districts: Camden, Trenton, and Newark.

- The nonprofits must have experience operating schools in low-achieving districts and commit to both building a new school and offering a rigorous academic program designed to prepare every student for college, career, and beyond.

### **Expanding Educational Opportunities For Children And Families:**

In order to give families in Newark greater access to quality schools, Governor Christie has improved the authorizing and application process for charter schools, encouraged more charter school applicants, created greater flexibility with administration and finances, and allowed districts to convert failing public schools into charters.

- The Christie Administration approved the expansion of several of the Newark's highest performing charter schools.
  - TEAM Academy, a network of KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools in Newark, will add a new elementary school campus, ultimately serving 500 additional students.

- North Star Academy, also in Newark, will continue to grow current schools and plans to add a new elementary and middle school campus, ultimately serving 590 new students.

According to an independent [report](#) by The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), "Compared to the educational gains that charter students would have had in a traditional public school (TPS), the analysis shows that students in New Jersey charter schools on average make larger learning gains in both reading and mathematics:

- "When we investigate the learning impacts of Newark charter schools separately, we find that their results are larger in reading and math than the overall state results."
  - "On average, charter students in New Jersey gain an additional two months of learning in reading over their TPS counterparts. In math, the advantage for charter students is about three months of additional learning in one school year. Charter students in Newark gain an additional seven and a half months in reading and nine months in math."

#### **Inter-District School Choice Program:**

The Interdistrict School Choice Program was permanently signed into law by Governor Christie in September 2010 and fully implemented beginning with the 2011-12 school year. The program is designed to increase educational opportunities for students and their families by providing students with the option of attending a public school outside their district of residence without cost to their parents.

*Enrollment has tripled in the past three years to 3,357 students in 2012-13, and it is anticipated to grow to more than 6,000 in 2013-14.*